

IMPROVING MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHING INFORMATION



YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR FISHING DATA

Marine Recreational Information Program Overview
Spring 2008

THE INITIATIVE

Partnership of public and private organizations coming together to build a new program to improve the collection, analysis, and use of recreational data

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

**Ever-greater demands for more
timely and accurate data**

WHAT'S IT MEAN TO YOU?

If we over-estimate harvest...

Lower Catch Limits
Fewer fishing opportunities

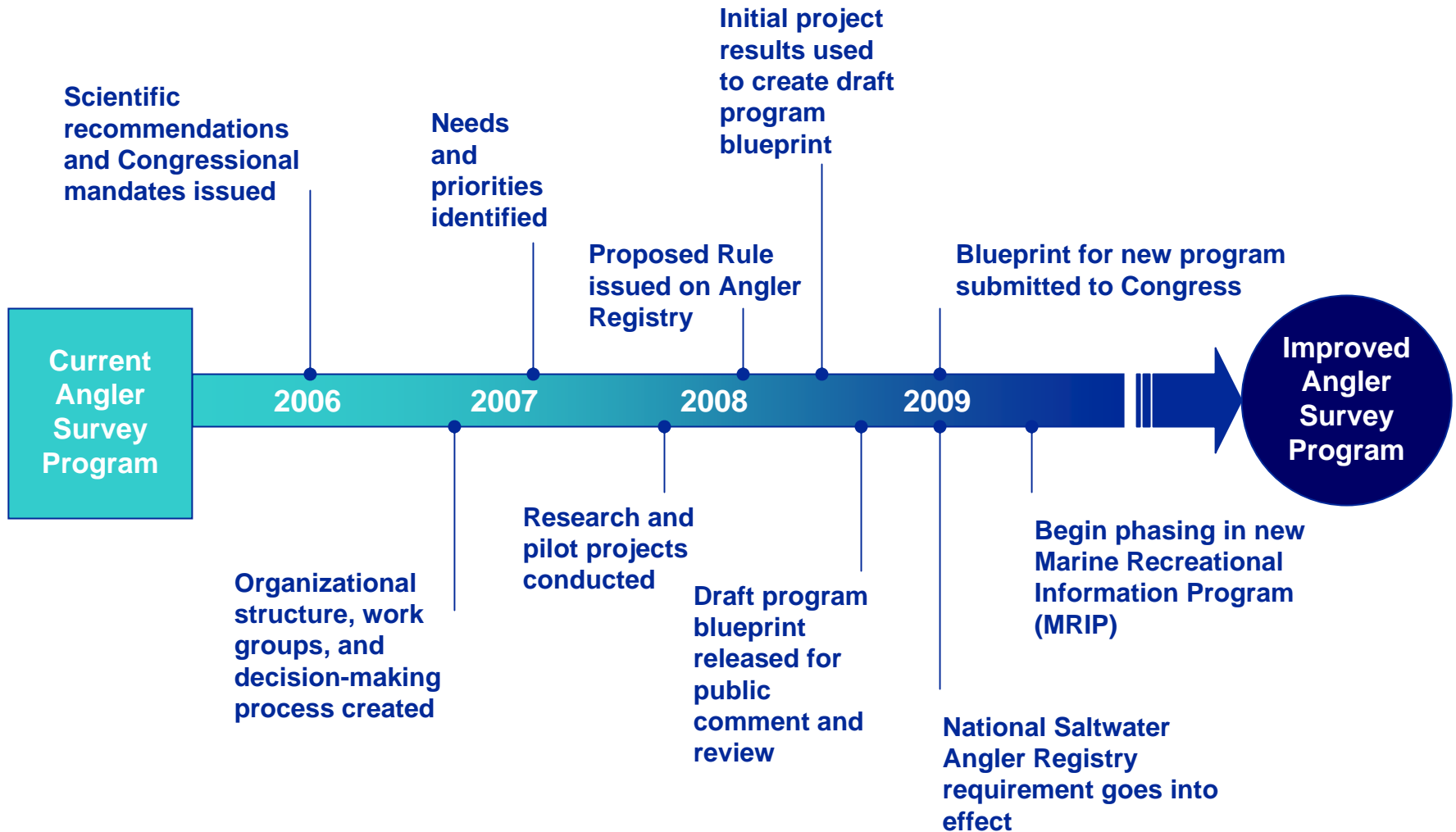
If we under-estimate harvest...

Overfishing
Less Fish to Catch



IN OTHER WORDS: Better info, better decisions, better fishing.

INITIATIVE TIMELINE



INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

**“The MRFSS should be completely
redesigned”**

- National Research Council, *Review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods*, April 2006



SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT: “The lack of a universal sampling frame for all saltwater anglers is a major impediment to the development of a reliable and accurate survey program.”

INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

Specific concerns included:

- **Current catch and effort estimates may be biased high or low because the data collection and analyses are based on unverified assumptions.**
- **Challenges result from recreational fishing catch and effort estimates produced by multiple regional and state-specific surveys.**
- **Both the telephone and in-person interview components of the surveys have serious flaws in design or implementation that can increase bias.**
- **The for-hire industry should be considered a commercial sector and so survey methods and reporting requirements should be different from those for private anglers.**

BETTER INFORMATION IS A PRIORITY

**The 2007 Magnuson-Stevens
Reauthorization Act called for more
accurate and precise fishing information.**



CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE: One way to improve data is by creating a national saltwater angler registry, a phonebook of marine fishermen.

THE APPROACH

- 1. Get Funding**
- 2. Bring the best minds together**
- 3. Answer the important questions**

FUNDING

\$8.0 Million

Current Recreational Data Collection
Program budget

\$1.7 Million – FY07 MRIP funding (new)

\$3.5 Million – FY08 MRIP funding (new)

ANSWERING THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

NOAA Fisheries recently approved funding for 16 research projects including:

- a nationwide project to explore new methods of estimating catch and effort
- a nationwide project to develop common data standards across all saltwater recreational data collections programs
- a regional project to experiment with new ways to count released fish
- a regional project to conduct effort surveys using a list of anglers

ANSWERING THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Just a few of the issues we're looking at:

- Can we better estimate catch and release mortality?
- How do we better capture night fishing or fishing from private access points?
- Are there ways to increase angler participation in the data collection?
- What's the best way to use registries or fishing licenses to sample anglers?

WHY REGISTER ANGLERS?

1. Creates a Universal Sampling Frame

A phonebook of people who fish

2. Improves Efficiency

Contacts only those people that went fishing

3. Reduces Bias through Better Coverage

Reaches anglers outside of just coastal counties

REGISTRY KEY FACTS

- Anglers must register by January 1, 2009
- Only applies to fishing in EEZ and for anadromous fish
- Clear intention that ALL anglers be accounted for
- Feds can't charge a fee until January 2011

ON THE HORIZON

1. Regional listening sessions (Winter/Spring 2008)
2. Proposed Rule on the National Saltwater Angler Registry (Summer 2008)
3. New program blueprint released (Fall 2008)

Please Stay Connected



Visit us on the web at:
<http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/>